

No. 1 for 22 Weeks

Why RAW Is Well-Done



One year ago, with television wrestling ratings in a disastrous malaise, the World Wrestling Federation was grappling with what to do with its declining nine-year-old flagship cable series.

Prime Time Wrestling, which through the years, had filtered through six different formats—including one with a live audience—was still sputtering between a 2.2 and 2.5 average.

The switch to a predominantly live one-hour Monday night arena show was considered almost a desperation gamble in several quarters. However, *Monday Night Raw* has become the surprise success story of TV wrestling in 1993. Why?

COMMENTARY

Raw has somehow recaptured the mystique of unpredictability missing from the antiseptic formats of well-edited, post-produced taped weekend shows. Even on taped editions, the Monday hour is nothing more than a modernized and color version of *Live from Sunnyside Garden*, which veteran Northeast fans remember from the 1950s and '60s.

In just the last six months, the broadcast has presented an Intercontinental title change, Ric Flair's loser-leave-the-WWF loss to Curt Hennig, a WWF world title match, Sean Waltham's upset over Razor Ramon (Scott Hall) as the 1-2-3 Kid and the WWF debut of Jim Cornette. Titan Sports has established *Raw* as the program where the unexpected will happen and where conclusive finishes occur.

If one would point out some negatives, when *Raw* offers a match of longer than 15 minutes at the top of the program, typically it is interrupted by two commercial breaks, which distracts the continuity. Second, at times, Bobby Heenan and Randy Savage—much as they have in their first two pay-per-views with Jim Ross—begin to battle for mike attention that they intrude on Vince McMahon's ability to call the action. And an occasional angle fails because of camera angles (i.e., the floor camera angle did not give viewers a good view of the third Doink the Clown from the arena balcony on July 26).

However, *Raw* has become the best showcase ever for McMahon. *Matwatch*, in years past, has been critical of McMahon's style on taped broadcasts. However, the live show agrees with him. McMahon stays better focused on the match at hand, relies less on the gargle-mouthed hype, appears livelier and is at his best when he aggressively challenges heel managers and wrestlers to defend their actions. His recent face-off with Mr. Fuji and Yokozuna blew WCW's Tony Schiavone off the map. If only Vince could eliminate the artificial "hock-hock-hock-hah" laughs.

Perhaps the most underrated facet of *Raw*'s success is the matches often have little to do with the WWF's arena bouts. It's strictly a made-for-TV show you can watch without being bombarded with house show hype (unless you count the constant Lex Express updates). *Monday Night Raw* has not only eclipsed WCW *Saturday Night* as cable's flagship mat show, it has surpassed *Clash of the Champions* for the element of surprise and viewer payoff. After 22 weeks on the top of the Nielsen heap, *Raw* is now a study guide for good mat programmers looking for ideas.

Matwatch '93

Steve

Beverly

We pundits who for years have made a spectator sport out of Monday-morning quarterbacking the mat industry have vented enough spleen to send us all to an emergency room of late.

After all, the one wrestling company which has pointed the finger at newsletters and radio talk hosts more than any other for "exposing" and "killing the business" has just exposed more than Missy Hyatt does on a pay-per-view.

With belt changes, matches and syndicated television in the can through Nov. 26, World Championship Wrestling has committed the very sin it has accused Dave Meltzer, me and countless others of executing. Why, many have asked? Because, you people, in their minds—or at least their public minds—they don't see any sin at all.

Put yourself in WCW president Bill Shaw's shoes. You have a financially-failing company which in the last two years has done about everything wrong an entertainment company can. Your area of expertise is personnel and human resources. Turner Broadcasting has tapped you, as a promising exec, to see if you can salvage anything of WCW.

In your first year, you spend nearly a year watching a wrestling icon alienate a staff of wrestlers and creative forces. You see an old guard. And while you tap another retreat to replace the icon, you decide to take the company where no man has before. So what if it ticks off the hardcore audience which, though declining, still fills the bulk of the rating diaries for your shows? Let 'em scream.

Enter a 27-year-old with Jimmy Johnson-perfect hair, who looks 29. Everywhere you've turned, you've been side-tracked by wrestlespeak when seeking reasons for your company's inertia. Ah, here's a young guy who looks good in a suit, projects a big-city image and when he talks to you, he talks television, not wrestling. At last, I have my guy!

(Continued on Page 2)

A Nielsen Survey

What The Kids & Teens Are Watching



Despite the overall decline and malaise in viewing patterns for television wrestling across-the-board in 1993 (with the exception of *Monday Night Raw*), children and teens are maintaining loyalties to syndicated offerings of the World Wrestling Federation. However, Turner Program Services' World Championship Wrestling shows are posting a deficit in kids/teens viewing of more than 3-to-1 to the WWF.

Steve Beverly
(Continued from Page 1)

He convinces you, in short, that these "wrestling guys" are idiots and with an approach focused on reaching city folks and with flashier TV, he can deliver.

He wants to make a deal with one of the big Hollywood studios in Florida to do your syndicated TV, which suffers the most in the ratings. Big, well-lit sound-stage, big-budget production, you've got it made. Why hasn't it been done before? Because none of your "wrestling guys" were smart enough to try.

Won't you give away your creative direction for four to five months by doing that much TV in advance? No problem. We bring in a different audience for each show. Those in the crowd for show two won't know what happened or why in show one. Besides, that's an old wrestling worry. We can always blame it on the sheets when they tell what we did.

This all sounds great if you're Bill Shaw. So The Stud gets his way and the store. He's doing something no one else in this company has been willing to do with these old wrestling mentalities.

Notice: The Stud still has virtually all of the "old guard" aides and associates around him. With every good reason. If his ploy fails, he can blame it on them because he's Shaw's guy and none of them are. The Terry Funks of the world know it and refuse to work for The Stud.

In six months, we may all eat our words if Hollywood Eric brings WCW higher ratings, greater ad sales and larger pay-per-view revenues. But make no mistake, The Stud is now The Boss of WCW. However, I'd love to lay odds on the results at the end of November.

According to a June 21 *Electronic Media* survey on children's television, the WWF package is the seventh most-viewed series among Saturday programs in the 12-17 age bracket. The WWF draws a 5.2 rating among junior high and high school age teens, ranking just below *Roseanne* reruns and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.

In two separate categories, the WWF programs rank number five among most-viewed programs of the 12-17 and 2-11 ages after 3 p.m., either weekends or weekdays. Titan's package attracts a 5.2 with the 12-17s and a 5.8 among younger children.

Ironically, while Turner's wrestling does not register among the kid/teen favorites, TPS' *Captain Planet* (sixth, age 2-11) and *The Wonder Years* reruns (tied for seventh, 12-17) did make the lists.

WCW attracted a 1.6 rating among 12-17s and in the post-3 p.m. hours, a 1.4 (12-17s) and 1.8 (2-11s), according to *EM*.

The Nielsen estimates offer viewing trends which forecast ad sales for the kidvid demographics this fall. The sales forces for both the WWF and WCW target ratings in specific age brackets to sell national ads on their syndicated and cable programs.

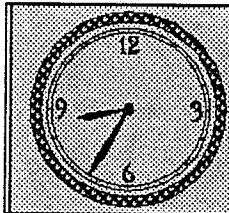
The survey period covers Sept. 21-May 23 and indicates Titan Sports will be able to command a substantially higher price for toy, packaged foods and milk advertising on its programs. (Example: if an ad agency is willing to offer \$5,000 per rating point in the 12-17 category, WWF conceivably could sell spots targeted to those ages for \$26,000 per 30-seconds. WCW could only charge \$8,000.)

TEENS 12-17 (Post-3 pm)

1. Married with Children	6.7
2. Star Trek: TNG	6.6
3. Roseanne (Syn)	5.6
t. Star Trek: DSN	5.6
5. WWF (Syn.)	5.2
6. Batman (Fox)	4.7
7. Imagination I	4.6
t. Wonder Years (Syn)	4.6
9. Baywatch	4.5
10. Tiny Toons	4.3

Ages 2-11 (Post-3 pm)

1. Batman (Fox)	6.7
t. Imagination I	6.7
3. Goof Troop	6.5
4. Tiny Toons	6.1
5. WWF	5.8
6. Capt. Planet	5.3
7. Magic II	5.2
8. Star Trek	5.1
9. Darkwing Duck	5.0
10. Married with Children	4.7



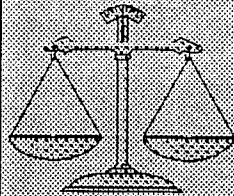
As Time Goes By

Jim Cornette may have abandoned his vow never to go to the WWF but he made a honey of a deal when he did. A barrel of Face-to-Face segments taped last week were strictly to push Smoky Mountain shows in Knoxville and Johnson City, along with a few of Cornette's other towns. Even two years ago, how many of you would have laid odds on Vince McMahon agreeing to that?....Boni Blackstone did a series of tunnel interviews with Cornette for WWF *All-American* and *Mania*....Titan's p.r. office: we have no plans to add pay-per-views to match WCW's monthly offerings from September-December. A smart move because if we're right, WCW will burn out its market.

ESPN2, the new supplementary cable service, is expected to add Global and perhaps one additional wrestling show for a three-hour "trashsports" block when it premieres in October....Full-page ads pushing the UWFI Oct. 5 pay-per-view as "shoot wrestling --it's REAL" appeared in *Broadcasting and Cable* magazine July 19....Did you know Hollywood Eric Bischoff's first link to wrestling was when he walked into the Gagnes' old AWA office hawking ninja turtles costumes? The next TRWH Reporters' Roundtable is scheduled Aug. 30 immediately after *Summer Slam*. Thanks to so many of you who called to hear Dave...Scott...Lance and me after *Beach Blast*.

Bischoff and comptroller Don Edwards were scheduled to be in Orlando Monday to negotiate a long-term deal for taping at Disney-MGM. But what happens if the ratings don't go up in November?....A number of callers have recently been lying about their subject matter to the producer of *The Jim Ross Show* on WSB-AM Sunday nights in order to get on and tell guest host Joe Pedicino how much better WCW is....WWF is now planning to do its own radio syndication.

Once again, Ole is being his usual self. Ole's July 24 "Inside the Horsemen" seg on the WCW Hotline was a play-by-play of the Horsemen's alleged sexual exploits after *Beach Blast*. The WWF has made its mistakes in this area but WCW now outstrips the USWA as the most demeaning mat company to women....Ole's hotline seg challenging Dave Meltzer and others to a "fight" was as amusing as it was ludicrous. To suggest Meltzer has done more than any living being to destroy the mat business is another assumption wrestling fans are dummies. As for the fight offer, that's the same bully threat you issued at me in a dressing room in 1978. What other Turner exec could get away with that behavior?



EDITORIAL

(Ed.: Terry Funk's July 30 segment on *The Real Wrestling Hotline* was the most impassioned and emotional we have ever heard Funk, who was clearly not "in character." We felt you should read Terry's remarks with our editorial endorsement.)

What do you people have to do--be hit in the face or something? I'm talking about the people in the wrestling profession. What are you: a bunch of bozos? Don't you have any sense whatsoever? Why don't you get your brain tuned to what's going on in this world? Is it gonna have to hit you and slap you in the face once again? What am I talking about? I'm talking about the Feds. Stop putting your head in the sand like a bunch of ostriches. Pull it out. Straighten out your act. Because if you don't straighten out your act in professional wrestling, you're not going to have an act to straighten.

I'm just shooting you straight---right down the middle. The same way I shot (WCW chief Bill) Shaw and (executive v.p. Bob) Dhue when I walked into their office....to apply for that job down there of running their company that I couldn't go ahead and take because I can't see myself working with some of those people. Why can't I? Because they don't know anything about professional wrestling. I beg to differ with Dave Meltzer this week on one of his numbers. He said that WCW does do some things right. Well, I'm gonna have to call Dave a liar because I can't think of anything they've done right in a long time.

They're subpoenaing guys right and left. Now they've subpoenaed The Junkyard Dog. What do you think they're talking to him about? You think they're talking to him about how to make the best barbecue sauce in town? They've subpoenaed Hulk Hogan, who I'm sure probably sung like a babe, instead of going ahead and hanging by a noose himself. They've even subpoenaed Ric Flair. I don't know if they've talked to him, or what. But I'm telling you something: they're fixing to come down on the wrestling profession and there's only one way to correct it. And that's by doing what's right for a change.

Talk to the people within it. If you're one of them within it, well talk to them. Say, "Hey, guys, we've gotta straighten this out or we're not gonna have a business." Is all this junk and garbage and crap that's been going on necessary? Is it necessary for the higher echelon to stick their heads in the holes? Can't they realize what's fixing to happen to this business?

You've got, what is it? *Current Affair*? You've got Linda McMahon coming out where they're chanting stuff about child molesters, or something. And Linda McMahon says, "We fired 'em," and they hear, "Cut," from out of the bushes....and who in the hell is it in the bushes? *A Current Affair*. You've got Tom Brokaw coming up with a new show. He's gonna spend an hour on the wrestling business. What do you think they're gonna talk about? Probably what's reached the absurd.

If we don't straighten it out, we're not gonna have a business. And that's from the bottom of my heart. Believe me, I care about the wrestling business. My father was a professional wrestler. He died in the wrestling business. My brother was a professional wrestler. And I tell you, he did a good job of doing stuff that was good for the business. I tell you, I try to do what's good for the business. Maybe I haven't always done what's good for the business...but I'll tell you one thing for sure. I've got the business at heart and I want to see it survive.

I'll talk to you quite a lot more....a lot of problems we have in this business and I'm going to tell you how to straighten them out. Because you (the fans) are the only people who can do it. Only you can. I'll tell you how we can change the wrestling business. And I've got ideas....and I'm gonna tell them to you because I can't get anybody else out there to listen---because they don't have a lick of sense. But the ol' Funker knows!

THE RATINGS PAGE

CABLE WRESTLING RATINGS

Averages for July	Rating/Share	Total Homes	June Avg.
Monday Night Raw	2.9/4.7	1.731 million	2.8/4.5
WWF All-American	2.3/7.4	1.421 million	2.4/7.4
WCW Saturday Night	2.1/5.6	1.282 million	2.0/5.2
WCW Main Event	1.8/4.7	1.102 million	2.0/4.9
WCW Power Hour	1.4/5.7	810,000	1.1/4.8
WWF Mania	1.1/3.6	632,750	1.0/3.5

Week Ending July 5	Rating/Share	Total Homes	Nat. Rank
Monday Night Raw (7/5)	2.9/4.9	1.748 million	14
WCW Saturday Night (7/3)	2.2/5.9	1.301 million	T36
WCW Main Event (7/4)	1.7/4.9	1.023 million	63
WCW Power Hour (7/3)	1.4/6.2	841,000	
WWF Mania (7/3)	1.2/4.0	723,000	

Week Ending July 12

Monday Night Raw (7/12)	2.7/4.4	1.608 million	24
WWF All-American (7/11)	2.4/7.5	1.469 million	35
WCW Saturday Night (7/10)	2.0/5.2	1.202 million	54
WCW Power Hour (7/10)	1.6/7.1	960,000	
WWF Mania (7/10)	1.1/4.1	664,000	

Week Ending July 19

Monday Night Raw (7/19)	2.9/4.8	1.762 million	14
WWF All-American (7/18)	2.4/7.7	1.468 million	35
WCW Saturday Night (7/17)	2.2/5.5	1.301 million	43
WCW Main Event (7/18)	2.0/5.2	1.204 million	51
WCW Power Hour (7/18)	1.1/3.8	661,000	
WWF Mania (7/18)	1.0/2.9	602,000	

Week Ending July 26

Monday Night Raw (7/26)	3.0/4.9	1.808 million	N/A
WWF All-American (7/25)	2.2/7.1	1.344 million	40
WCW Saturday Night (7/24)	2.2/5.7	1.336 million	43
WCW Main Event (7/25)	1.8/4.0	1.079 million	N/A
WCW Power Hour (7/24)	1.3/5.7	779,100	N/A
WWF Mania (7/24)	0.9/3.3	542,000	N/A

WHAT THEY MEAN

A modest increase---far more modest than the tax increase we'll pay next year---in July over June. *Monday Night Raw* posted a 4% gain for the second straight month, led by a 3.0 for the July 26 Bret Hart-Bam Bam Bigelow main event. *WCW Saturday Night* actually rose ever so slightly to a 2.1 average, primarily because all but one show was only 55 minutes. But *Main Event* dropped 10%, with the Ric Flair-Arn Anderson vs. Chris Benoit-Bobby Eaton bout only drawing a 1.8. Likewise, *WWF All-American* slipped 4% to a 2.3 after a weaker June 26 edition. In the morning, *Power Hour* registered a 27% hike, topped by a 1.6 July 10.

SYNDICATION

For those of you curious about how the two majors' syndicated packages are doing, those ratings are more delayed than the weekly cable numbers. However, Titan Sports provided us its most recent stats, for the week ending July 11. The WWF shows grossed a 6.3, which would place that package ninth among all syndie shows. Turner's WCW shows grossed a 4.2.

To refresh on what "gross ratings" are: for national ad sales, ratings for the three syndicated offerings of each group are totaled together. If *WWF Superstars* draws a 2.7 nationally, *Challenge* 2.5 and *Spotlight* 1.1, those add up to the 6.3 total. Same for WCW's three syndie shows.

FINAL NOTES

We are now running into a snag on the TBS ratings information. TBS Research, which is made up of some sincerely nice people, will not release the weekly cable ratings to us without the approval of WCW. I have drafted a letter to Bill Shaw asking for the ratings, which I predict will do no good....*Monday Night Raw*'s winning streak now up to 22 weeks. That's the longest stint on top since a *World Championship Wrestling* run of 20 weeks in 1987-88Bischoff's 21-week average on *Saturday Night* is now 2.11, still below Kip Frey's 2.18 and the 2.48 in the final six months of Jim Ross as v.p. for TV....*Raw* may be hot but on July 12 was beaten head-on by both ESPN's *All-Star Home-run Contest* (4.1) and TBS' *Smokey and the Bandit* (3.0).

THE REAL WRESTLING HOTLINE

Dave Meltzer (Mon-Wed-Fri)
Steve Beverly (Tu-Sat)
James Cornette (Thu)
John Arezzi (Sun)

and on Option 2...

SCOTT HUDSON (Mon.)
DUTCH MANTEL (Tu.-Th.)
TERRY FUNK (Fri.)
PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY (Sat.)
1-900-903-9030

MATWATCH '93 SUBSCRIPTIONS

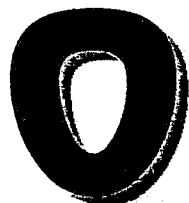
Subscriptions are \$5 for a 3-issue set. Gift subscriptions (to someone other than yourself) earn you one bonus issue on your subscription order (please see page 5 for special gift offer during August).

International rates: \$9 for a 3-issue set.

Please make checks payable to STEVE BEVERLY and not to *Matwatch '93*. Send subscriptions to: STEVE BEVERLY, 16 ROBIN HOOD LANE, JACKSON TN 38305.

The Saga Begins

My Life on the WCW Hotline



Okay, you people who have been waiting for the deepest of confessions. My three-and-a-half years on the WCW Wrestling Hotline was an ethical conflict....a betrayal....a mistake. It was wrong. That won't be enough to satisfy the Mark Maddens and selected newsletter publishers, columnists or readers of the world. But I don't live my life to appease them.

I should have abandoned the original *Matwatch* in March 1990 to affiliate with a wrestling company's business venture. One makes mistakes in life and you try to learn from them. Indeed, the association on that hotline was one of the most difficult and, to be honest, distasteful experiences I have had, except for the support, encouragement and tenacity of Lance Russell, the hotline coordinator who created the idea of 900 *Matwatch* and defended it against aghast wrestlers and front office executives to the day of his retirement from World Championship Wrestling.

A Special Request

All too often, we pundits and insider fans take this industry and even ourselves a bit too seriously.

Let me briefly digress on a serious subject. I have made rare requests of you people. In 1991, you helped bring to recovery our original *Matwatcher of the Year*, Dan Gibson, after he suffered a serious stroke.

For the month of August, I am offering a special on GIFT subscriptions to *Matwatch '93* for a special reason.

In three west Tennessee counties, we have a higher per capita rate of child abuse than in the ghettos of New York and L.A. We have tried hard to appeal to promotions to cut down on storylines with domestic violence.

In Jackson, Tn., we are fortunate enough to have the Carl Perkins Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Carl, a member of the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame and composer of the legendary "Blue Suede Shoes," his and one of Elvis Presley's biggest hits, is not just a name on the center. He devotes countless hours to work with these abused children and to helping find them good homes.

This center is staffed by people who don't whine because they don't get large government handouts. They just get out and do it.

For the fourth year, I will appear on the annual Carl Perkins Circles of Hope Telethon to raise money for the center, Aug. 29.

I am offering GIFT subscriptions to *Matwatch '93* for \$4 for a 3-issue set during August. For every gift set, I will contribute \$1 to the Carl Perkins Center. If every subscriber gave one gift, it would result in more than \$200 for the center.

In addition, for every minute of calls to my program on *The Real Wrestling Hotline* Saturday, Aug. 28, I will contribute 20 cents to the center. Won't you join me in this most loving and heartfelt cause?

GIFT TO _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Try this on: I was "fired" or suggested for dismissal from the hotline at least six times. Interestingly, the computer printouts bear out the fact that WCW has probably made more money from my Tuesday nights on that service for three-and-a-half years than anyone, except for Jim Ross and Missy Hyatt. Lance's entire idea was that if that hotline did not have something other than your typical Saturday night hype, people wouldn't call.

But four weeks in, I saw the stormclouds coming and they should have told me something. Ric Flair was being asked to drop his NWA/WCW world title to Lex Luger in St. Louis in April 1990. One of WCW's on-air people was openly telling people the date of the planned belt switch at every stop on the tour. When the company learned this, it attempted a swerve---the belt would actually change in Chicago, the night before St. Louis.

WCW didn't book the TBS studio for Jim and Missy to do their hosting chores of *WCW Main Event* live on that Sunday just for their recreation. The plan was for Jim and Missy to switch to a live (actually pre-taped the night before) remote with Lance and Chris Cruise from St. Louis to review the title change.

So to offer some perspective, after some headlines, I went on my Tuesday-before hotline seg to offer history on title changes through the years in St. Louis and concluded "history and the odds suggest that if Luger is ever going to win the world heavyweight title, it will happen in St. Louis Saturday night." That was it. I still have the transcript. Jim Herd saw it. Lance heard it. They had no problem with it.

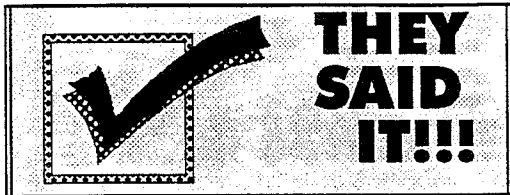
Bill Apter, George Napolitano, Dennis Brent and all of the top magazine people were in Chicago. That Friday night, I received a call around 9:30 from Eddie Gilbert, who was home in Atlanta. Eddie said, "There's trouble in Chicago. Flair's won't drop the belt. They're in a long intermission and it's crazy!"

Before the weekend ended, I would receive two anonymous threatening phone calls from people claiming to be with WCW, both telling me I would "be sorry" if I didn't get off of that hotline. Reports to me from Chicago were that Flair was using my hotline report as a reason for not dropping the belt. However, I had other calls from insiders who told me it was all a matter of Flair exercising a veto clause in his contract over giving up the title, which Jack Petrik confirmed he had.

Lance engaged in a stern defense of me with a well-known WCW name who suggested the company was two-faced in criticizing Dave Meltzer as a newsletter editor when it put me on the hotline (an assertion with which I do not disagree).

Bill Apter and several others called for my firing. But the furor would soon die. However, it was only the first tornado.

(In September: the week Lex Luger quit.)



The Best of July

1. Bob Armstrong, Smoky Mountain: "When Jim Cornette was born, he was kicked around a lot and was always sucking on something. Things haven't changed. He gets kicked around all the time and he still sucks." 2. Jerry Lawler, *Monday Night Raw*, to Stu and Helen Hart: "I bet when you two were young, the Dead Sea was only sick." 3. Lawler, RAW: "I wanted to meet the people (the Harts) who had more tragedies than Shakespeare." 4. Lawler, RAW: "I understand when Bret was born, Stu had to collect on his accident insurance." 5. Jesse Ventura, *Worldwide*: "Come on, Schiavone. Go in that dressing room! Be a MAN!" 6. Bobby Heenan, RAW: "Why doesn't the WWF ever let any of my favorites sing? Like Jim Nabors or Burl Ives." 7. Heenan, RAW: "Is that really Bret's parents, or is it Fred and Ethel Mertz up in the balcony?" 8. Terry Funk, *The Real Wrestling Hotline*: "Mama and I went to Atlanta--up to the zoo in the 12th floor of the CNN Center, where all of the carnivorous animals line up to eat their young."

Strongest Comments

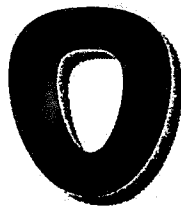
1. Tony Schiavone/Ventura, WCW: (TS) "I wonder what the motivation is for signing this match between Davey Boy and Vader one week before *Beach Blast*." (JV) "I can tell you--RATINGS!" 2. Dutch Mantel, TRWH: "The USWA is the most morally bankrupt organization in the country today." 3. Lance Russell, TRWH: "I don't think WCW is trying to attract kids. In fact, before I retired from WCW, I wasn't sure *who* they were trying to attract." 4. Scott Hudson, TRWH: "When Barry Windham came out (for his *Beach Blast* match), he looked like he'd been up all night." 5. Shane Douglas, TRWH: "Wrestling is full of more misfits, liars and backstabbing people than any business in the world."

Blooper Awards

1. Schiavone, WCW: "I wonder what the motivation is for signing this match one week after *Beach Blast*." (Ventura replies: "Uh, Tony, you mean one week before *Beach Blast*.") 2. Schiavone, WCW: "Jesse,"
(Continued in opposite column)

The Split Hour

We Get Bischoff In Prime Time



On the surface, one might be puzzled at the probable decision to split Turner Broadcasting's long-time two-hour wrestling block on Saturday nights into two separate half-hours.

However, a serious business reason exists for the likely change this fall. Hollywood Eric Bischoff and Terry Taylor are expected to team for a reformatted 7:05-8:05 p.m. slot on weeks when the Atlanta Braves or Atlanta Hawks do not air during the second mat hour.

From a television standpoint, the reason for the split is twofold: 1) the A.C. Nielsen Co., which measures ratings, is no longer allowing cable networks the luxury of breaking out a multi-hour program into separate ratings hours for sales purposes. If a show runs two hours, it will be measured for the full 120 minutes. In the past, networks have been able to sell shows such as *WCW Saturday Night* as *WCWSN I* and *WCWSN II* to garner better ad prices for the higher-rated hour. Historically, the earlier hour of *WCWSN* has posted higher numbers.

Secondly, TBS officials and some WCW insiders have felt the one-hour versions of *WCWSN* have been tighter, more smoothly-produced and better on viewer attention spans.

If Bischoff does succeed in inserting himself into prime time, he will go against the grain of private comments he has made to previous WCW job candidates that Jim Ross overexposed himself when Ross supervised TBS production.

Of course, if Hollywood Eric fails to draw ratings at 7:05, the question must be raised: will he fire himself?

Blooper Awards

(Cont. from opp. col.)

"It was just one month ago, you and I were at ringside for *Slamboree*!" (Ventura replies: "Uh, Tony, I have to correct you. I wasn't AT *Slamboree*!")

The Rest of July

OVERACTING AWARD - Catherine White, WCW, "Search for Cactus Jack."

BEST ACTOR - Cactus Jack, for at least trying to salvage an unsalvageable saga.

WORST INTERVIEWER - Jennifer Jarrett, USWA, for giggling her way through a Brian Christopher interview.

BOO AWARDS - 1. WWF, for inserting two commercial breaks in the first 14 minutes of its Shawn Michaels-Marty Jannetty and Bret Hart-Bam Bam Bigelow RAW bouts. 2. WCW, for abrupt cutting away from brawls. 3. WCW, Cactus segs.

MATWATCH
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